

Abstracts of Articles

“The Colonial Office and Governor Ord” by JOHN LEGGE

Sir Harry Ord, first Governor of the Straits Settlements after their transfer from the Government of India to the Colonial Office in 1867, found himself continually at odds with the Colonial Office. The irritable exchanges between Singapore and London throw light on Colonial Office perceptions of the procedures appropriate to Crown Colony government in a new imperial age.

“For Want of Rice: Sarawak’s Attempts at Rice Self-Sufficiency During the Period of Brooke Rule, 1841–1941” by OOI KEAT GIN

In Sarawak under the Brooke regime, efforts to promote rice cultivation were consistently overshadowed by the channelling of capital and labour to other more profitable economic pursuits. Measures to increase domestic rice output produced few results, and the failure of Brooke rice policy was amply demonstrated when the country faced a severe rice crisis in 1919–21. However, the lessons learnt during the crisis were soon forgotten, and despite government policies designed to reduce Sarawak’s dependence on imported rice, little was accomplished during the next two decades.

“Japanese Economic Activities in Sabah from the 1890s until 1941” by SABIHAH OSMAN

Most writings on Sabah’s socio-economic development tend to focus on the roles by the British and other Europeans but neglect contributions by the Japanese, who were at least equally important to Sabah’s economic growth. This article provides a study of Japanese economic activity in Sabah, focusing on immigrant workers and highlighting the policies of successive Japanese governments toward emigration to Sabah.

“Russian Commercial Shipping and Singapore, 1905–1916” by KAREN A. SNOW

After the Russo-Japanese War, Russia’s Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Trade and Industry tried to reorganize the country’s shipping on a more commercial basis by creating steamship lines and exploiting various trade opportunities. Because Singapore was a major halting point for Russian ships using the sea route from the Black Sea to the Far East, Consuls there were in the forefront of trade issues. Based on records of the Singapore Consulate and other materials at the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Policy in Moscow, the article explores plans for the commercialization of Russian shipping and the problems faced by Consuls in advancing Russian economic activity in the region.

“Protection or Partition: Ernest Satow and the 1880s Crisis in Britain’s Siam Policy”
by NIGEL BRAILEY

This article elucidates features of the unusual career of Ernest Satow, and calls into question the traditional emphasis on the French threat to nineteenth-century Siamese independence, as opposed to the Singapore-derived plan to annex southern Siam in the context of a partition of the country.

“Communal Irrigation, State, and Capital in the Chiang Mai Valley (Northern Thailand): Twentieth-Century Transformations” by PAUL T. COHEN and ROSS E. PEARSON

Transformations this century in communal irrigation in the Chiang Mai Valley, northern Thailand, are examined under the impact of political and economic changes such as state centralization, the intensification of capitalist agriculture, and urbanization. An anthropological political economy perspective is applied in placing anthropological subjects (irrigation weir communities and their leaders) at the intersection of local, national and global processes which allows scope for the agency of these subjects within the structural constraints imposed by political economy changes.

“An Alternative Vietnam? The Nguyen Kingdom in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” by LI TANA

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Nguyen kingdom was known as Dang Trong to Vietnamese, and Cochinchina by the Westerners. In just 200 years it won control over three-fifths of the territory in modern Vietnam. The experiences of this expanding southern frontier area seem to suggest an image of Vietnam that is very different from the north, opening a door to an alternative world in which diversity was tolerated, and indeed exploited, for Vietnam’s own development.

“Regionalism and the Nature of Nguyen Rule in Seventeenth-Century Dang Trong (Cochinchina)” by NOLA COOKE

Analyses of regionalism in the Vietnamese past usually adopt a north-south dichotomy. This essay presents a more nuanced approach to one case, Nguyen rule in Cochinchina (Dang Trong), by arguing it was initially a form of Thanh Hoa colonialism, rather than colonization, and only developed a truly southern focus after Nguyen rulers failed to regain their family’s ascendancy at the Restored Le court.